

## Syllabus

### **DRIVING INNOVATION IN SOCIETY- THE SWEDISH CONTEXT (SSE Intensive Course)**

Based on theoretical foundations in international business, strategic and multinational management, innovation and entrepreneurship, and change management, the course aims at offering participants ‘knowledge by immersion’ about how internationally active firms based in a small, open European economy deal with novelty creation. Important aspects are how they conceive of and innovatively approach challenges in today's business environment. The importance of underlying societal structures, socioeconomic factors, human interaction and culture for innovative activity will be analyzed.

#### Stockholm as the Course Context

Innovation is today happening in centers of excellence around the world faster than ever before. At the same time, business and government leaders are making strategic decisions amid high uncertainty: while the International Monetary Fund projects global growth of 3.3% in 2026 and 3.2% in 2027, with advanced economies at 1.8% in 2026, it also notes pressures associated with evolving trade policies -pressures which technology investment and business adaptability can, nevertheless, help to mitigate.

In this environment, the best antidote to macro headwinds and uncertainty is innovation, the creation of products and services that make life better -whether it's vaccines, clean energy or artificial intelligence. Every country wants to foster a culture of innovation, but this is easier said than done. The magic and love for entrepreneurship and experimentation must be there.

This is why this intensive course is offered in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. Sweden is a member of the EU and an especially suitable location for this type of program, as the country is a small open economy forced to respond to changes in the global business environment and policy conditions. The country is also home to a high number of large multinational corporations, as reported in OECD work, and has a vibrant start-up ecosystem. At the city level, Stockholm is second only to Silicon Valley in the number of billion-dollar tech companies (unicorns) per capita. This outward orientation is reinforced by strong links with

the United States, and many prominent Swedish engineers, founders of corporations, managers and scholars have been educated in and inspired by the US.

In practice, the limited home market for Swedish firms has long required an international outlook when establishing, growing, and developing businesses. After decades in the post-war era when the 'rules of the game' largely favored ever-greater openness, trade, and globalization, that long-standing script has in recent years been challenged -by shifting trade policies and rising geopolitical tensions that are reshaping the environment firms operate in. As a result, multinational (and domestically active) corporations, as well as startups, facing changing conditions have to respond in novel, innovative ways. Even so, Sweden remains a top-tier innovation performer: Global Innovation Index 2025 ranks Sweden 2nd overall, and the European Commission's European Innovation Scoreboard 2025 ranks it 1st among EU Member States. This makes Stockholm a useful setting for an intensive course whose purpose is to study whether a broad formula for innovation can in fact be identified, and what companies and governments need to do to make innovation happen.

### Course Content

This program will, with the help of scholars at the research frontier and study visits to successful startups and leading established multinational corporations, give participants the opportunity to reach deeper insight into contemporarily pressing issues in regard to:

- Innovation in transportation
- Digital innovation
- Social innovation
- Innovation in health
- Innovation in family firms
- New venture creation

Sessions during the two weeks include:

-Lectures/presentations on:

Introduction to Swedish innovation

Macroeconomics from a Swedish perspective

Innovation in family firms

Angel investing and venture capital in the Swedish entrepreneurial ecosystem

Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things

Art and business in Sweden

Art and finding a meaningful direction

Wellbeing, welfare and happiness in Sweden

-Workshops taking place at famous museums in the heart of Stockholm

-Study visits to Swedish firms and discussions with firm experts and representatives

-Guided tours and excursion

### Intended Learning Outcomes

After having completed the program the students should be able to:

- Analyse what makes countries innovative and how firms based in a small open economy perceive and innovatively address the contemporary challenges of their business environment
- Evaluate the Swedish business, cultural and societal context and its foundation
- Demonstrate enhanced intercultural awareness and communication skills

### Admittance, Format, Attendance Policy, Group Work and Grading

The course is only open for MSc and MBA Students from SSE's Partner Universities, MBA students are given priority. Participants should normally have basic knowledge of economics, international business and strategic management.

The Program teaching philosophy is using a mix of lectures, case studies, interactive seminars, study visits, team projects, and networking with SSE students. Literature, lectures, case discussions, and company visits together provide the basic building blocks for acquiring the knowledge students will need in the short term for their team assignments, and in the long term for working with or within organizations. SSE faculty will be involved as lecturers, as well as practitioners from innovative Swedish firms.

Attendance is mandatory and active class participation is expected throughout the program. The basic tenet of the course is to take advantage of the 'collective wisdom' and the varying backgrounds of the participants. Interaction in groups and in the classroom will take center

stage. We strongly encourage students to come to the program with an open mind and a willingness to engage in discussions together with peers and faculty.

In addition to class participation, a project will underlie the evaluation of student performance for the final grade. The project is used to test students' analytical, synthesizing and evaluative skills and their ability to critically discuss the topics, lectures and literature. When evaluating student performance, we will be using Bloom's taxonomy. SSE uses a scale with four passing grades: Excellent, Very Good, Good and Pass. Participants will be graded on class participation (30%) and an individual written assignment analyzing and synthesizing the literature, guest speakers and study visits (40%). The remaining 30% of a participants grade will be determined on the basis of a group presentation, investigating the major themes in the course. The individual assignments should be submitted one week after the end of the course, and the finalized team presentation should be submitted two weeks after the end of the course.

The course gives 4.5 ECTS, and contains around 50 contact hours. The language of instruction is English.

### Career Relevance

The Intensive Course offers an opportunity to penetrate 'on site' how innovation and other contemporary business issues are perceived and dealt with, in the context of a small open economy home to many successful multinational firms and innovative SMEs. The theoretical foundations include international business, strategic and multinational management, innovation and entrepreneurship, and change management.

### Instructors and Program Coordination

- Dr. Pari Dimakou (Program Director and Teacher)

Pari is a Research Fellow affiliated with the House of Innovation, Department of Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology. She has served as a visiting professor at ESCE International Business School, France. She holds a PhD from Lancaster University Management School, UK. Her research interests include exchange in networks and gender equality in business contexts.

- Mrs. Linda Israelsson (Program Manager)

Linda is working at the Education Office in the Global Initiatives team with international exchange programs and collaborations. At SSE she has previously worked with BSc admissions, as a Department Coordinator and now as a Project Manager.

- Mrs. Emma Danbury

Emma is as an Exchange Coordinator in the SSE Global Initiatives Office. Before joining the team at SSE, she worked at the Fulbright Commission in Sweden with student advising and coordinating exchange programs for students and researchers between the U.S. and Sweden.

Teachers:

- Prof. Mattia Bianchi
- Prof. Micael Dahlen
- Dr. Pari Dimakou
- Prof. David Domeij
- Dr. Holmer Kok
- Prof. Pär Mårtensson
- Dr. Marco Mismetti
- Prof. Roberto Verganti
- Dr. Erik Wikberg